Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, keeping in view the rapid convergence of telecom, computers, television and electronics, etc.

(c) and (d) C& AG of India in his report for the year 1997-98 (No. 4 of 1999) covering "other autonomous bodies" presented to Parliament on 29th October, 1999 has commented adversely on the expenditure incurred on certain facilities to Chairperson, Members and Staff and Officers of TRAI. On the orders of the appropriate authority, the Department had issued orders regularising the expenditure incurred by Chairperson and Members from the date of assumption of their office till 14.3.99.

Based on the recommendations of the Group on Telecom and IT Convergence in the matter regarding strengthening of TRAI through suitable legislative amendment, the TRAI (Amendment) Ordinance 2000 was promulgated on 24th January 2000 to bring about certain structural changes in the principal TRAI Act. After the amendment to section 10 of the principal Act through the Ordinance, the terms and conditions of service of the staff, officers and other employees of TRAI shall now be prescribed by the Central Government.

Setting up of New Telephone Exchange in Meghalaya

2010. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone exchanges functioning at present in the State of Meghalaya;

(b) the number of new telephone exchanges are likely to be set up in the State during the Ninth plan;

(c) the details of funds allocated for the purpose; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, 54 Telephone exchanges are functioning at present in the State of Meghalaya.

(b) 20 new telephone exchanges are likely to be set up in the State in the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

(c) For 1999-2000 the funds allocated are 48.75 crores, Demands for Grant for the years 2000-2001 in respect of Department of Telecom Services has not

been approved by the Parliament as yet. The allocation of funds State-wise/ district-wise will be done only after the approval of Demand for Grants of the DoT by the Parliament.

(d) Exchange equipment for setting up the exchanges during 1999-2000 has already been procured. For the new exchanges for 2000-2001 onwards procurement of land, construction of building and fund is being arranged.

Telecom centres established in Assam

2011. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICA TIONS be pleased to stale:

(a) the details of norms/criteria on the basis of which the telecom centres are to be established in the different parts of the country;

(b) the total number of telecom centres established in Assam during the last three years; and

(c) the details of telecom centres proposed to be set up in the State during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

. THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Telecom Centres are established on demand> need and feasibility basis to provide commonly used telecom facilities like, Telegram, Fax, STD/ISD operations etc. at places, such as-Railway Stations, Long distance bus terminals, Airports, Hospitals, Market complexes etc.

(b) The Telecom Centres established as on date are 12 in the State of Assam. One Telecom Centre has been established during the last three years.

(c) There is no set target to open Telecom Centres during the Ninth Five Year Plan since these Telecom Centres are opened on the basis of demand, need and feasibility.

STD facility in rural areas of Meghalaya

2012. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of electronic telephone exchanges having STD facilities being set up in all the districts of Meghalaya;

(b) the number of such telephone exchanges set up during the last three years and till date; and